

CATALOGUE OF  
AN EXHIBITION OF  
ETCHINGS AND  
DRAWINGS

BY

HERMAN A. WEBSTER

ASSOCIATE OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY  
OF PAINTER-ETCHERS  
LONDON



FREDERICK KEPPEL & CO.  
4 EAST 39TH STREET  
NEW YORK

JANUARY 7 TO JANUARY 21, 1913



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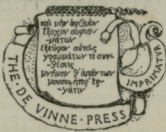
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NE300  
W39K44  
1913  
Webster

FREDERICK KEPPEL & CO.  
NEW YORK  
ESTABLISHED 1868

# CATALOGUE

## ETCHINGS

### 1 The Court, Bourron.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

### 2 Paysanne.

"... *Paysanne*, a clever and direct figure-study of an old peasant at Marlotte, comes as an episode of pleasing variety in Mr. Webster's work, and tends to show that, though he has his preferences, he is not really fettered by any limitation of subject or treatment."

Martin Hardie, *Herman A. Webster*.

### 3 Toledo.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

### 4 The Alhambra: Mirada de las Reinas.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

### 5 St. Ouen, Rouen.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

"His chief delight is in the nooks and corners of old-world thoroughfares and culs-de-sac, where deep shadows lurk in the angles of time-worn buildings, and sunlight ripples over crumbling walls, seamy gables, and irregular tiled roofs. Of such is a series of subjects found in old Rouen—the *St. Ouen*; the *Rue du Hallage*, where the cathedral spire towers high above old timbered houses; and that charming plate with the title, *Old Houses, Rouen*, a quaint corner of tenements whose high-pitched roofs stand propped against one another for all the world like a castle of cards. The etcher of this and of the *St. Ouen* was welcomed with warm sympathy by the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, which said that 'never before has there been so fervent and skilled an interpreter of the bowed timber and crumbling plaster of the old houses of Rouen, which line the street ending in the cathedral with its pointed spire against the open sky.'"

Martin Hardie, *Herman A. Webster*.

### 6 La Cathédrale, Rouen.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

7 Old Houses, Rouen.

8 La Rue du Hallage, Rouen.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

9 La Rue Haute, Pont de l'Arche.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

10 Cour Normande.

"And so we pass to two courtyard scenes—belonging, like the Rouen subjects, to the year 1906—the *Cour Normande*, and *Les Blanchisseuses*. In both we find the artist becoming more adept in using broad and balanced disposition of light and shade to give not merely chiaroscuro but the suggestion of actual color, and more skilled in adding exquisiteness of detail to refined truth of visual impression. *Les Blanchisseuses*, in particular, with its rich mystery of shadow, with its sunshine falling on white walls and lighting the seamed interstices of plaster and timber, has an indefinable charm that, for myself at any rate, makes it a high-water mark in Mr. Webster's art."

Martin Hardie.

11 Les Blanchisseuses.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

12 Old Butter Market, Bruges.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

13 Bruges: Fête de l'Arbre d'Or.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

"Of similar type is the *Old Butter Market, Bruges*, where a cobbled street curves beneath a shadowed archway; and then for variety you step from 'Bruges la Morte,' from the silent cobbles that centuries ago were a busy thoroughfare for ringing feet, to the Bruges of to-day. It is Bruges in a very different aspect, this free and spirited study made on July 27, 1907, on the day of the Fête de l'Arbre d'Or, giving a quick impression of gay holiday crowds, of banners fluttering against the open sky, and of the 'belfry old and brown' whose carillon inspired America's poet, as its tall form and fretted outline have inspired the American etcher of whom I write."

Martin Hardie.

14 La Rue Brise-Miche, Paris.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

"It is but natural that an artist of Mr. Webster's temperament, a devoted admirer of Meryon, should become absorbed in Paris herself and endeavor to put upon copperplate the 'poésie profonde et compliqué d'une vaste capitale.' The Bruges and Rouen plates showed Mr. Webster to be keenly susceptible to the magnetism and charm of mediæval tradition, but Paris, steeped in sentiment even more than Rouen or Bruges, was to rouse a still greater warmth and feeling. He began by searching



out those picturesque streets in the old quarters that have survived the wholesale demolition of Baron Haussmann, a name hated by artists as that of Grainger by lovers of books. The *Rue Brise Miche* found its way to the Royal Academy, and was also honored by publication in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (July, 1907)."

Martin Hardie.

## 15 La Rue de la Parcheminerie, Paris.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

"Very akin in its restful balance of composition and in fine shadow effect is the *Rue de la Parcheminerie*—of special value now, for the old street has disappeared largely since the making of the plate." Martin Hardie.

## 16 Notre Dame et le Quai aux Fleurs, Paris.

"Another plate of this 'Quartier Marais' series is a noble representation of Notre Dame seen from an unusual aspect. It is a drawing from near the Hôtel de Ville and shows the splendid mass of the cathedral rising above the irregular houses that face the Quartier Marais and the Quai aux Fleurs. There is freedom and charm in the treatment of the foreground, where a little tug puffs along the river and the big barges move cumbrously under the lee of the near bank, and in the middle distance where the light plays pleasantly over the old houses; but the roof of the cathedral itself, put in with unpleasing rigidity of line, comes like cold fact in the middle of romance."

Martin Hardie.

## 17 Le Pont Neuf, Paris.

"A fitting companion to this vision of Notre Dame is *Le Pont Neuf*, another of the etcher's largest and most distinguished plates. The stern solidity of the bridge, with its massive masonry, its corbeled turrets, and its deeply shadowed arches, makes pleasing contrast with the irregular sky-line of the sunlit houses that rise beyond."

Martin Hardie.

## 18 La Rue Grenier sur l'Eau, Paris.

"A fourth plate, perhaps even finer than any of these in its force, directness, and concentrated simplicity, is the *Rue Grenier sur l'Eau*. There is much of Meryon in its clear, crisp line-work. Some day perhaps these loving studies of the old Paris of Balzac may be gathered in a series illustrating the 'Quartier Marais,' and published in an *édition de luxe* with descriptive text by the etcher. Let us hope that this may come to pass, for the buildings that Mr. Webster depicts are far more than a prosaic record of architectural features. There is a spiritual and human suggestiveness behind the mortar and bricks of his pictures: as a poet of his own nation has it, they are 'latent with unseen existences.' He has appreciated the fact that etching—an art hedged in by limitations and depending upon power of suggestion—is the one art that can give at once those delicate lines, those broad shadows, those crumbling bits of texture. The lover of etching can regard his subject with indifference, and take full joy in the soft play of sunlight, the fine choice of line, the effective massing of light and shade."

Martin Hardie.

19 *Porte des Marmousets, St. Ouen, Rouen.*

On verger paper.

"Gothic canopies and tracery are drawn with loving care in the *Porte des Marmousets, St. Ouen, Rouen*, but here again it is the mystery of shadow in the deep porch that supplies the true theme."

Martin Hardie.

20 *Notre Dame des Andelys.*

On verger paper.

"A church porch has also supplied the subject of one of Mr. Webster's latest works, *Notre Dame des Andelys*. The ordinary observer will delight in the print for its beautiful rendering of a noble fragment of architecture. Those who have real knowledge of etching will appreciate it still more for its clever biting and for its subtle delicacy of line so cunningly used for the indication of stone, glass, and woodwork with their different surfaces and textures."

Martin Hardie.

21 *The Same.*

On paper of a warmer tone.

22 *La Rue Cardinale, Paris.*

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

"*La Rue Cardinale* has affinity of general treatment, and is not the least interesting for an amazing *tour de force* in the rendering of color and texture in the striped blind over a shop-front."

Martin Hardie.

23 *St. Sernin, Toulouse.*

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

"It may be said of all Mr. Webster's etchings—and perhaps there could be no higher praise—that each possesses the faculty of provoking fresh interest. That is certainly the case with four of his most recent plates. One is an interior of *St. Sernin, Toulouse*, majestic and stately, full of suggestive mystery in the religious light that falls with soft touch upon the pillars, throws into relief the dark masses of the choir-stalls, and strives to penetrate the dim recesses of the vaulted roof. *St. Sernin* will be among the rariora of the collector, for the plate unfortunately broke when twelve proofs only had been printed."

Martin Hardie.

24 *La Rue Fromental, Paris.*

In black ink, on white paper.

25 *The Same.*

In warm brown ink, on toned paper.

26 *Sur le Quai, Montebello, Paris.*

27 *Ancienne Faculté de Médecine, Paris.*

On verger paper.

"The artist's subtle perception of light and his refined draftsmanship have been used to singular advantage in



the *Ancienne Faculté de Médecine*, 1608. One is grateful to him for his fine record of this domed building that was a little gem of Renaissance art, though there is a note of sadness in the substructure of balks and struts set at its base by the ruthless hand of the destroyer."

Martin Hardie.

**28 Vieilles Maisons, rue Hautefeuille, Paris.**

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

**29 In the Quartier St. Jean, Marseilles.**

**30 Le Vieux Port, Marseilles.**

**31 Cortlandt Street, New York.**

"They are the most marvelous things on the face of Mother Earth to-day. It took me two months to begin to see them, but then they began to glow, to take shape, and to grow. Perhaps no work of human hands in all the world offers such a stupendous picture as New York seen from almost anywhere within the down-town district, or from the river or the bay. There are cliffs and cañons where sun and shadow work the weirdest miracles, and soaring above them, between forty and fifty stories from the ground, rise arched roofs and pointed ones, gray and gold and brown, that one must see with one's own eyes to have the faintest conception of. From across the Hudson in the afternoon when the sun goes down you can watch the shadows creep up the sides of these mountains of brick and stone until you 'd swear you were looking out on some gigantic fairyland."

Herman A. Webster.

"*Cortlandt Street, New York*, will appeal most, perhaps, to those who live beneath the familiar shade of these monstrous habitations, with their hundreds of staring eyes; but the ordinary man, though he may find it strangely uninspiring and unromantic, will at any rate admire the firm decision of the drawing and welcome the slender filaments and trembling gray spirals of smoke—so difficult to express in line with a point of steel—that cast a veil over the sordid reality of the scene."

Martin Hardie.

**32 The Same.**

On paper of a warmer tone.

**33 The Bridge, Frankfort.**

On thin Japan paper.

"Two etchings of old bridges over the Main at Frankfort must rank among the best work that Webster has yet produced. One is a small and spirited plate showing the tower of the cathedral and a row of houses, most delicately drawn, rising with a beautiful sky-line above the solid mass of the shadowed bridge with its heavy buttresses. The other shows the old bridge that spans the Main between Frankfort and Sachsenhausen. Legend tells that in compensation for finishing the building within a certain time the architect made a vow to sacrifice to the devil the first living being that crossed the bridge. Then,

when the fatal day arrived, he drove a cock across, and so cheated the devil of his due. Much the same story of outwitting the devil is told about the building of the cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle. Whether Webster ventured upon any compact I do not know; but this plate, in its building, in its well-constructed composition, in its splendid effect of brilliant sunshine, is one of the most successful tasks he has ever accomplished. The group of figures on the near bank, happily placed like those in Vermeer's famous *View of Delft*, adds no little to the charm of the scene. I would set this plate beside *Les Blanchisseuses* and the *Quai Montebello*, which Mr. Wedmore has found 'modestly perfect,' as representing the very summit of Webster's art."

Martin Hardie.

#### 34 The Same.

On verger paper.

#### 35 Alte Mainbrücke, Frankfort.

#### 36 Löwenplätzchen, Frankfort.

#### 37 Der Lange Franz, Frankfort.

On verger paper.

"Among the new plates are four that deal with street scenes in the Alt Stadt of Frankfort. *Der Lange Franz*, a view of the Rathaus tower that took its nickname from a tall burgomaster of the town, is the smallest of all, but a little gem, brilliant with light and rich in the mystery of shadow."

Martin Hardie.

#### 38 The Same.

On white paper.

#### 39 Street of the Three Kings, Frankfort.

On verger paper.

"Then there are the *Street of the Three Kings*, the *Bendergasse*, and *Sixteenth-century Houses*, all of them felicitous in charm of theme, in play of light and shade, and in the suggestion of life given by the animated figures."

Martin Hardie.

#### 40 The Same.

On white paper.

#### 41 Bendergasse, Frankfort.

"A brilliant draughtsman, he never seems to hesitate or lose his way among the manifold intricacies of the old-world buildings that he depicts. He aims always at knitting his subjects into fine unity of composition by broad massing of light and shade. 'In the last few months,' he writes, 'I have grown never to make an etching for etching's sake, but for the means it gives of studying closely the play of light across my subject.' That is his main theme: the light that travels now with cold curiosity as it did centuries ago, glancing into open windows, throwing into relief a corbel or a crocket, casting a shadow under



eave or window ledge, revealing, like a patch in some tattered garment, the cracks and seams in moldering plaster or time-worn timber. In depicting these store-houses of human joys and aspirations, hopes and despairs, he has none of Meryon's gloom and morbidness. It is true that behind many of the windows in these poor homes of his pictures some Marie Claire may be toiling in sad-eyed poverty; yet for Webster the outside shall be sunny, little white curtains shall veil the gloom, and flowers shall blossom on the window ledge, though the sad worker may have watered them with her tears. And if sunshine is still potent in these new plates, there is also a fresh and joyous note of life and movement in the streets. The introduction of figures, well placed and full of character, is a new development in Webster's art. Bustling workers, or happy groups of gossiping women, or the dark mass of a distant crowd, are introduced with consummate skill, and the picturesqueness of the old streets gains new value from the suggestion of this living stream of human traffic. The presence of modern life enhances the gray and wrinkled age of the buildings which have watched so many generations come and go."

Martin Hardie.

#### 42 Kloostergasse, Frankfort.

#### 43 An Old Court, Sachsenhausen.

On verger paper.

"There are admirable figures again in *An Old Court*, one of the plates that the collector of future days will most desire to possess. There is less in it of obvious labor than in the street scenes; the etcher has overcome a natural fear of blank spaces; and his reticence and more summary execution have lent to this plate much of the unconscious and unpremeditated charm that is one of the finest qualities which an etching can possess."

Martin Hardie.

#### 44 The Same.

On white paper.

#### 45 La Rue St. Jacques, Paris.

"While he has surrendered for the time being to the charm of Frankfort, Webster has not been unfaithful to the Paris of his early love. Of Paris he might say, like Montaigne, 'That city has ever had my heart; and it has fallen out to me, as of excellent things, that the more of other fine cities I have seen since, the more the beauty of this gains on my affections. I love it tenderly, even with all its warts and blemishes.' All the more for the warts and blemishes of its old buildings Webster loves it, too; and while working on his Frankfort plates he has completed another of *La Rue St. Jacques, Paris*, which, I think, is one of the best etchings he has ever made. . . . It is not merely fine in its pattern of light and shade, but it has a direct force and simplification that are rich with promise for the future."

Martin Hardie.

#### 46 La Route de Louviers (with a view of Château Gaillard).

On verger paper.

"In landscape, as in his architectural work, Webster sets his theme upon the plate with fine skill of arrangement and with exquisite draughtsmanship. *La Route de Lou-*



*viens* is exhilarating in its feeling of sunshine, and pleases by its absolute simplicity of statement. It is honest, and without artifice. Printed 'as clean as a whistle,' without any of the doubtful expedients that give a meretricious attractiveness to so much modern etching, it appeals by its rightness of pattern and precision of line. Those who see high promise as well as present fulfilment in Webster's art will not regret that he has left the town and set out where

" 'thro' the green land,  
Vistas of change and adventure,  
The gray roads go beckoning and winding.' "  
Martin Hardie.

47 **The Same.**

On white paper.

48 **La Maison Meline, Paris.**

Trial proof. Before the sky, before the lettering on the sign, and the *affiche* on the wall to the right.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

49 **The Same.**

On verger paper.

50 **The Same.**

On white paper.

51 **Spitalplatz, Strassburg.**

52 **At the "Golden Sun," Strassburg.**

On old Japan paper.

53 **The Same.**

On white paper.

54 **The Clockmaker's, Frankfort.**

On old Japan paper.

55 **The Same.**

On verger paper.

56 **The Same.**

On white paper.

57 **Coin du Vieux Marché, Marseilles.**

On verger paper.

58 **The Same.**

On paper of a warmer tone.

59 **Le Commissionnaire.**

The first impression from the plate. Two proofs only were printed. The other proof is in the possession of M. Félix Bracquemond.

Kindly lent for this exhibition.

- 60 Portrait of Carlotta de Felice. Engraved on  
Silver-point.

- 61 Cortlandt Street, New York.

Drawing for the etching.

"I know of no other artist, save perhaps Mr. Muirhead Bone, who can use the pencil-point with such exquisite fineness and precision in the production of an architectural drawing that, with all its accuracy, still retains the freshness of a sketch. Finding in a portfolio a drawing of *Cortlandt Street* and several others that repeated the subjects of the Frankfort etchings, I felt curious as to the exact relationship between these drawings and the work on the copperplate. This interest was largely, perhaps, that of a fellow-etcher, keen to see 'how the wheels go round,' but Webster's reply to a question on this subject may interest others as well. 'I determine my composition,' he wrote, 'in outline first. This outline I transfer to the plate. Then I go out and carefully study in pencil, on the original outline sketch, the subject I want to do, so as to "get acquainted" with it before beginning the more exacting work upon the copperplate. I never use a drawing to work from except sometimes as an extra guide in the biting, where a careful study can be very useful.' They are beautiful things, these pencil-drawings of New York and Frankfort, but there can be only one of each. The etchings, fortunately, can be shared and enjoyed by many possessors."

Martin Hardie.

- 62 The Last of the Old Grand Central Station.

- 63 Excavation for the Grand Central Station.

- 64 The Trestle, Grand Central Station.

- 65 Broad Street.

- 66 Alte Mainbrücke, Frankfort.

Drawing for the etching.

- 67 Der Lange Franz, Frankfort.

Drawing for the etching.

- 68 Kloostergasse, Frankfort.

Drawing for the etching.

- 69 Fahrgasse, Frankfort.

- 70 The Clockmaker's, Frankfort.

Drawing for the etching.

- 71 Alte Mainzergasse, Frankfort.

- 72 Nonnengasse, Frankfort.

- 73 Der Heiligegeistbrunnen, Frankfort.

- 74 Towers of the Cathedral, Mentone.
- 75 The Cathedral, Mentone.
- 76 On the Quai, Mentone.
- 77 In the Old Town, Mentone.
- 78 The Arch, Mentone.
- 79 Le Quai des Anglais, Mentone.
- 80 In the Quartier St. Jean, Marseilles.  
Drawing for the etching.
- 81 The Market, Marseilles.
- 82 An Old Quarter, Marseilles.
- 83 Street in the Italian Quarter, Marseilles.
- 84 Sur le Quai Montebello, Paris.  
Drawing for the etching.
- 85 Vieilles Maisons, rue Hautefeuille, Paris.  
Drawing for the etching.
- 86 La Maison Meline, Paris.
- 87 Vezillon, Normandy.
- 88 At the "Golden Sun," Strassburg.  
Drawing for the etching.
- 89 Spitalplatz, Strassburg.  
Drawing for the etching.
- 90 Schlachthaus, Strassburg.
- 91 Klein Frankreich, Strassburg.
- 92 Saalgasse, Frankfort.
- 93 An Old Corner, Frankfort.
- 94 In Sachsenhausen.
- 95 Sketches.
- 96 Sketches.
- 97 Sketches.





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